Joel
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Joel

Chapter 1

The word of G<small>OD</small> that came to Joel son of Pethuel.
Listen to this, O elders,
Give ear, all inhabitants of the land.
Has the like of this happened in your days
Or in the days of your ancestors?
Tell your children about it,
And let your children tell theirs,
And their children the next generation!
What the cutter has left, the locust has devoured;
What the locust has left, the grub has devoured;
And what the grub has left, the hopper has devoured.^acutter…locust…grub…hopper The meaning of the corresponding Heb. terms is uncertain; they probably designate stages in the locust’s development.
Wake up, you drunkards, and weep,
Wail, all you swillers of wine—
For the new wine that is denied you!^bdenied you Lit. “cut off from your mouth.”
For a nation has invaded my land,
Vast beyond counting,
With teeth like the teeth of a lion,
With the fangs of a lion’s breed.
They have laid my vines waste
And splintered my fig trees:
They have stripped off their bark and thrown [it] away;
Their runners have turned white.
Lament—like a maiden girt with sackcloth
For the husband of her youth!
Offering and libation have ceased
From the House of G<small>OD</small>;
The priests must mourn
Who minister to G<small>OD</small>.
The country is ravaged,
The ground must mourn;
For the new grain is ravaged,
The new wine is dried up,
The new oil has failed.

Farmers are dismayed
And vine dressers wail
Over wheat and barley;
For the crops of the field are lost.
The vine has dried up,
The fig tree withers,
Pomegranate, palm, and apple—
All the trees of the field are sear.
And joy has dried up
Among the people.
Gird yourselves and lament, O priests,
Wail, O ministers of the altar;
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
O ministers of my God.
For offering and libation are withheld
From the House of your God.
Solemnize a fast,
Proclaim an assembly;
Gather the elders—all the inhabitants of the land—
In the House of the E<small>TERNAL</small> your God,
And cry out to G<small>OD</small>.
Alas for the day!
For the day of G<small>OD</small> is near;
It shall come like havoc from Shaddai.^cShaddai Traditionally “the Almighty”; see Gen. 17.1.
For food is cut off
Before our very eyes,
And joy and gladness
From the House of our God.
The seeds have shriveled
Under their clods.^dThe seeds … clods Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
The granaries are desolate,
Barns are in ruins,
For the new grain has failed.
How the animals groan!
The herds of cattle are bewildered
Because they have no pasture,
And the flocks of sheep are dazed.^edazed Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
To You, O E<small>TERNAL</small> One, I call.
For fire has consumed
The pastures in the wilderness,
And flame^ffire…flame I.e., scorching heat. has devoured
All the trees of the countryside.
The very beasts of the field
Cry out to You;
For the watercourses are dried up,
And fire has consumed
The pastures in the wilderness.

Chapter 2

Blow a horn in Zion,
Sound an alarm on My holy mount!
Let all dwellers on earth tremble,
For the day of G<small>OD</small> has come!
It is close—
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of densest cloud
Spread like soot over the hills.
A vast, enormous horde—
Nothing like it has ever happened,
And it shall never happen again
Through the years and ages.
Their vanguard is a consuming fire,
Their rear guard a devouring flame.
Before them the land was like the Garden of Eden,
Behind them, a desolate waste:
Nothing has escaped them.
They have the appearance of horses,
They gallop just like steeds.
With a clatter as of chariots
They bound on the hilltops,
With a noise like a blazing fire
Consuming straw;
Like an enormous horde
Arrayed for battle.
Peoples tremble before them,
All faces turn ashen.^aturn ashen Meaning of Heb. uncertain; cf. Nah. 2.11.
They rush like warriors,
They scale a wall like fighters.
And each keeps to his own track.
Their paths never cross;^bcross Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
Not a single one jostles another,
Each keeps to his own course.
And should they fall through a loophole,
They do not get hurt.^cAnd should they fall … not get hurt Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
They rush up the wall,
They dash about in the city;
They climb into the houses,
They enter like thieves
By way of the windows.
Before them earth trembles,
Heaven shakes,
Sun and moon are darkened,
And stars withdraw their brightness.

And G<small>OD</small> roars aloud
At the head of the divine army;
For vast indeed is this host,
Numberless are those that do God’s bidding.
For great is the day of G<small>OD</small>,
Most terrible—who can endure it?
“Yet even now”—says G<small>OD</small>—
“Turn back to Me with all your hearts,
And with fasting, weeping, and lamenting.”
Rend your hearts
Rather than your garments,
And turn back to the E<small>TERNAL</small> your God.
For [God] is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in kindness,
And renouncing punishment.
Who knows but [God] may turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind
For grain offering and drink offering
To the E<small>TERNAL</small> your God?^dWhen the locusts depart, there will again be yield enough for offerings; see 1.9.
Blow a horn in Zion,
Solemnize a fast,
Proclaim an assembly!
Gather the people,
Bid the congregation purify themselves.^epurify themselves Cf. Exod. 19.10; Zeph. 1.7.

Bring together the old,
Gather the babes
And the sucklings at the breast;
Let the bridegroom come out of his chamber,
The bride from her canopied couch.
Between the portico and the altar,
Let the priests, G<small>OD</small>’s ministers, weep
And say:
“Oh, spare Your people, E<small>TERNAL</small> One!
Let not Your possession become a mockery,
To be taunted by nations!
Let not the peoples say,
‘Where is their God?’”
Then G<small>OD</small> was roused
In behalf of this land
And had compassion
Upon this people.
In response to this covenanted people
G<small>OD</small>
  declared:
“I will grant you the new grain,
The new wine, and the new oil,
And you shall have them in abundance.
Nevermore

will I let you be
A mockery
among the nations.
I will drive the northerner<sup
class="footnote-marker">f</sup>the northerner
I.e., the locusts. Emendation yields “My multitude”; cf. “nation”
(1.6), “horde,” “army,” and “host” (2.2, 5, 11, 25). far from
you,
I will thrust it into a parched
and desolate land—
Its van to
the Eastern Sea^g<i
class="footnote">the Eastern Sea The Dead Sea.
<span
class="poetry indentAll">And its rear to the Western Sea;<sup
class="footnote-marker">h</sup>the Western Sea
The Mediterranean Sea.
And the
stench of it shall go up,
And
the foul smell rise.”
For
[G<small>OD</small>] shall work great deeds.
Fear not, O soil, rejoice and be
glad;
For
G<small>OD</small> has wrought great deeds.
Fear not, O beasts of the
field,
For the pastures in the
wilderness
Are clothed with
grass.
The trees have borne
their fruit;
Fig tree and
vine
Have yielded their
strength.
O children of Zion, be
glad,
Rejoice in the
E<small>TERNAL</small> your God.
For
you have been given the early rain out of kindness,
<span
class="poetry indentAll">Now the rain is made to fall [as] formerly—

The early rain and the late—

And threshing floors shall be piled with
grain,
And vats shall overflow
with new wine and oil.
“I will repay you for the years<sup
class="footnote-marker">i</sup>for the years
Emendation yields “double what was.”
<span class="poetry
indentAll">Consumed by swarms and hoppers,
<span class="poetry
indentAll">By grubs and locusts,
<span class="poetry
indentAll">The great army I let loose against you.
And you shall eat your
fill
And praise the name of
 the E<small>TERNAL</small> your God
<span class="poetry
indentAll">Who dealt so wondrously with you—
<span
class="poetry indentAll">My people shall be shamed no more.
And you shall know
<span
class="poetry indentAll">That I am in the midst of
Israel:
That I the
E<small>TERNAL</small> One am your God
<span class="poetry
indentAll">And there is no other.
<span class="poetry
indentAll">And My people shall be shamed no more.”

Chapter 3

After that,
<span class="poetry
indentAll">I will pour out My spirit on all flesh;
<span
class="poetry indentAll">Your sons and daughters shall
prophesy;
Your elders shall

dream dreams,
And your youths shall see visions.
I will even pour out My spirit
Upon male and female slaves in those days.
Before the great and terrible day of G<small>OD</small> comes,^aBefore the great and terrible day of G<small>OD</small> comes Moved up from v. 4 for clarity.

I will set portents in the sky and on earth:
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke;
The sun shall turn into darkness
And the moon into blood.
But everyone who invokes G<small>OD</small>’s name shall escape; for there shall be a remnant on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as G<small>OD</small> promised. Anyone who invokes G<small>OD</small> will be among the survivors.^bAnyone who invokes G<small>OD</small> will be among the survivors Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

Chapter 4

For lo! in those days
And in that time,
When I restore the fortunes
Of Judah and Jerusalem,
I will gather all the nations
And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.^aJehoshaphat Here understood as “G<small>OD</small> contends”; contrast v. 12.
There I will contend with them
Over My very own people, Israel,
Which they scattered among the nations.
For they divided My land among themselves
And cast lots over My people;
And they bartered a boy for a whore,
And sold a girl for wine, which they drank.
What is this you are doing to Me, O Tyre, Sidon, and all the districts of Philistia? Are you requiting Me for something I have done, or are you doing something for My benefit? Quick as a flash, I will pay you back;
for you have taken My gold and My silver, and have carried off My precious treasures to your palaces;
and you have sold the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem to the Ionians, so that you have removed them far away from their homeland.
Behold, I will rouse them to leave the place you have sold them to, and I will pay you back:
I will deliver your sons and daughters into the hands of the people of Judah, and they will sell them into captivity to a distant nation—for G<small>OD</small> has spoken.
Proclaim this among the nations:
Prepare for battle!
Arouse the warriors,
Let all the fighters come and draw near!

Beat your plowshares^bplowshares See note at Isa. 2.4. into swords,
And your pruning hooks into spears.
Let even the weakling say, “I am strong.”
Rouse yourselves^cRouse yourselves Meaning of Heb. uncertain. and come,
All you nations;
Come together
From round about.
There bring down^dbring down Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

Your warriors, O E<small>TERNAL</small> One!
Let the nations rouse themselves and march up
To the Valley of Jehoshaphat;^eJehoshaphat Here understood as “G<small>OD</small> judges”; contrast v. 2.
For there I will sit in judgment
Over all the nations round about.
Swing the sickle,
For the crop is ripe;
Come and tread,
For the winepress is full,
The vats are overflowing!
For great is their wickedness.
Multitudes upon multitudes
In the Valley of Decision!
For the day of G<small>OD</small> is at hand
In the Valley of Decision.
Sun and moon are darkened,
And stars withdraw their brightness.
And G<small>OD</small> will roar from Zion,
And shout aloud from Jerusalem,
So that heaven and earth tremble.
But G<small>OD</small> will be a shelter to this covenanted people,
A refuge to the children of Israel.
And you shall know that I the E<small>TERNAL</small> your God
Dwell in Zion, My holy mount.
And Jerusalem shall be holy;
Nevermore shall strangers pass through it.
And in that day,
The mountains shall drip with wine,
The hills shall flow with milk,
And all the watercourses of Judah shall flow with water;
A spring shall issue from the House of G<small>OD</small>
And shall water the Wadi of the Acacias.
Egypt shall be a desolation,
And Edom a desolate waste,
Because of the outrage to the people of Judah,
In whose land they shed the blood of the innocent.

But Judah shall be inhabited
forever,
And Jerusalem
throughout the ages.
Thus I will treat as innocent their
blood
That I have not treated as
innocent;^f<i
class="footnote">I will treat as innocent their blood / That I have
not treated as innocent Emendation yields “their unavenged blood
shall be avenged.”</i>
And
G<small>OD</small> shall dwell in Zion.